

# PARENT HANDBOOK

Last updated 6/25



**Little Learners Spectrum Center, INC.  
ESTABLISHED 2021**

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Little Learners Spectrum Center, INC. believes that all children are unique and we must teach in a way that reaches all children where they are. Our program prides itself on teaching a developmentally appropriate, child directed learning environment that follows the teaching strategies of Project Construct. Project Construct says a child's environment consists of three teachers: the student, the teacher, and the environment. In our classroom, each child will develop through teacher guided, hands-on experimentation and exploration in the areas of social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.

At LLSC, we strive to create a beautiful, home-like organized space, full of endless material for students to explore and use everyday. Centers are set up according to the student's interests, learning style and level of development, with developmentally appropriate material available at all times. With this, we open a world of curiosity, endless ideas, amazing art and a love for learning. We work hard to display the childrens' art with documentation of their ideas with adults' reflections. We know that children learn best from the world around them and we support them developing knowledge, imagination and expression.

## GOALS FOR THE PROGRAM

During our day at LLSC we practice in the development and strengthening of the following areas in each child.

- A feeling of belonging, love, and respect
- Friendliness, empathy, and consideration towards others
- Self-confidence, initiative, and a positive self-image
- An inquiry approach to learning
- An ability to solve problems
- Assistance with meeting developmental milestones, while meeting each child where they are
- Support for children with developmental delays and connecting them with appropriate resources

## Each child is provided the opportunity:

- To express his/her ideas, dreams and aspirations
- To participate in large and small group activities
- To grow in physical, social, cognitive and emotional areas of development

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Choosing educational child care for your family is a difficult decision to make. This is why we feel it is very important that you are involved in every step, as we provide care and education for your child. Good communication between parents and staff is essential for the safety and wellbeing of your child. Parent participation is encouraged through observation and active involvement. Highly trained staff will be guiding your child through this learning process. Many teaching techniques will be practiced to meet each child's individual learning style.

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## Curriculum

We follow Project Construct Curriculum. Project Construct is derived from the belief that learning is a lifelong process in which learners construct knowledge through interactions with their physical and social environments. Through "hands-on, minds-on" learning experiences, students in Project Construct classrooms attain deep understandings in the core content areas, while they also learn to work collaboratively with adults and peers in vibrant learning communities.

## Children with Developmental Delays

At LLSC we strive to meet the needs of all students, despite where they are developmentally. We collaborate with several outside agencies to ensure each child receives the best possible education. Our educated staff will assess for such delays and provide referrals to families. If ABA services are needed, LLSC offers a special needs program for ages 3-5 years old.

### Little Learners Special Needs Program

When your child is accepted into the special needs program at Little Learners, they are entering into a therapy-based classroom. The classroom has a lead teacher and an assistant teacher, much like our other classrooms. Each student in our program also has been approved for ABA hours through their insurance. A Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) is then assigned to them through the ABA Squad (a visiting, outside agency). The RBT is supervised by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA).

When your child is in the classroom, they must have an RBT with them to assist them throughout their day. The RBT works directly with the teacher and the BCBA to implement each child's individualized behavior plan. This will give them the best opportunity to succeed in a classroom setting and ensure a smooth transition into public school for Kindergarten.

Since it is necessary for each student in the special needs program to have an RBT in order to attend, if for some reason your child's RBT is out sick, ABA Squad will try their best based on client and therapist availability to either find a replacement RBT for that day's hours or to make up the time elsewhere to ensure continuity of care. If there is no RBT available, your child will not be able to attend the program that day.

Our regular classroom hours are 8am - 3pm, Monday through Friday. However, individual hours vary based on need and depending on approved ABA hours.

Classroom tuition is \$160/week, which is the same as our other pre-k classrooms. ABA therapy is billed separately through your child's insurance and may require meeting a deductible or paying co-insurance depending on your policy. This will be determined in your meeting with ABA Squad.

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**State Inspection Copies:** You may request a copy of inspections from the director or go online to get these inspections at any time. Just visit the website: <https://healthapps.dhss.mo.gov/childcaresearch/>

## Children's Personal Information

You have the right as a parent to obtain a copy of your child's records. This request needs to be made in writing. You may also request a meeting with the director to go over any questions you have at that time.

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Our discipline strategy is *Conscious Discipline*, which is based on respect for the child's self-esteem and promoting respect for others. Only constructive methods of discipline shall be used to promote good behavior. The staff will work with the child and parent to resolve problems that may arise. If the child's behavior consistently disrupts the flow of the program, physically or emotionally harms others, or otherwise conflicts with the program guidelines, a conference with the parents will be scheduled. In the event that the problem persists after reasonable attempts have been made to resolve it, the child may be dismissed from the program.

## GOALS FOR THE CONFERENCE

1. For the parent to feel positive about the child and the child's experience in the program
2. For the parent to feel informed about the child's experience
3. For the parent to understand why we do things the way we do, and the cooperation we need from them
4. For staff to understand and appreciate the parent's ideas, feelings, and way of doing things.
5. To identify questions or concerns the parents or program staff may have about possible or necessary changes in behavior management and safety within the program
6. To strengthen the relationship and generate good feelings between parents and staff

## ORIENTATION FOR NEW PARENTS

LLSC holds a family night/open house every year before our fall session begins. Parents and families will have the opportunity to see their child's classroom, meet the teacher, and acclimate to the program. We feel it is important to make the student's transition into school as smooth and satisfying as possible.

## ENROLLMENT

LLSC is open to the general public. We accept enrollment without regard to race, religion, sex or nationality. Our center is licensed through the State of Missouri for children ages 0-12.

A number of forms must be completed before your child is officially enrolled into our program. A non-refundable enrollment fee is also required when registering your child.

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## Enrollment forms include:

- Child Enrollment Form
- Medical Examination Report
- CACFP Enrollment Form for Child Care Centers
- Income Eligibility Form for Child Care Centers
- Infant and Toddler Feeding and Care Plan (if applicable)
- Immunization Records
- Sunscreen Authorization
- *Additional forms may be required*

\*When enrolling your child, you will contract times in which you will drop your child off and pick him/her up. This contracted time is needed in order to schedule staff. This is located on the Child Enrollment Form.

An in-person meeting will be conducted with your family in order to determine that we can meet your child's needs.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

We are open for operation between the hours of **6:30am** to **5:30pm** Monday through Friday.

## **STUDENTS MUST BE DROPPED OFF BY 9AM TO ATTEND FOR THE DAY!**

We ask the parent to fill out a contract to specify times their child will arrive and time they will depart. This is located on the child enrollment form. This contract is needed to maintain child/adult ratios and class sizes regulated by the State of Missouri. We understand that sometimes things come up. On occasion, a later drop off time may be approved if the parent/guardian contacts the office in advance.

## TUITION

Tuition is charged weekly for the child's spot at the center. This is regardless of whether or not they are attending each day due to sickness, vacation, etc. The center is staffed for the number of children enrolled and therefore tuition due despite daily attendance.

- 0-24 months \$225/week
- 2 years olds \$190/week
- 3-5 years old \$175/week
- After school drop in \$100/week

**There is also a fee of \$5 for children who remain in our care for more than 9.5 hours/day.**

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Charges for tuition are weekly and must be paid *in advance*. Tuition is billed Friday of the previous week and is **due Monday of the program week. If the tuition is not received by Wednesday, a \$50 late charge will be added.** If tuition is not received by the end of the second week, your child will be dismissed from the center until the balance is paid in full. (Re-admittance is dependent on whether his/her position is still available.)

**Check:** Please make checks for tuition and enrollment fee payable to *Little Learners Spectrum Center*

**Cash:** Payment can be made via cash and a receipt will be provided.

**Credit/Debit:** Tuition can also be paid via credit/debit using Brightwheel for a fee of 2.9%.

**AFT:** Tuition can be paid online with Brightwheel using a checking account for a much smaller fee (min \$0.25- max \$2.00).

\* We can no longer take payment over the phone. You must enter your payment information directly into the Brightwheel system.

\*Tuition can be auto drafted or paid weekly upon invoicing.

\*There is no longer a discount for paying monthly

\*Tuition rates are subject to change

**NO PHONES POLICY- Please REFRAIN FROM USING YOUR PHONE IN THE BUILDING aside from checking in/out. Children are so excited at pickup and drop off to engage with their parents and staff occasionally have items to address.**

## LATE PICKUP

Opening and closing time is strictly enforced. Parents will contract a specific time on the enrollment form for drop off and pick up. If you fail to pick up your child by the contracted time, you will be issued a late pick-up fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes late. This is necessary because the center needs to know how many children will be there at all times for staffing/ratios. Alternative arrangements can be made with prior notifications or a phone call.

## HOLIDAYS

Parents are responsible for payment for the following HOLIDAYS. LLSC will be closed on the following days:

New Year's Day	Memorial Day
Good Friday	Christmas Eve
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Day	New Year's Eve

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## WINTER BREAK

LLSC will be closed the week between Christmas Eve and New Years Day each year. Parents WILL NOT be charged tuition for the days ***other than those listed above*** (Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day).

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Periodically throughout the year LLSC will be closed for professional development. Parents WILL NOT be charged tuition for those days.

## EMERGENCY CLOSURES

In the event of emergencies such as severe weather, power outages, or natural disasters, it may be necessary to temporarily close the center.

### Closure Procedures:

- Families will be notified as soon as possible via Brightwheel, email, and social media.
- If closures extend beyond three consecutive days, we will evaluate the situation and provide updates, including any changes to our operating schedule.

### Tuition During Closures:

At LLSC, tuition is not charged by the day but secures your child's spot in our program, as is standard for most centers in our area. As a not-for-profit program, tuition is essential to cover ongoing costs such as rent, utilities, and staff compensation, even during closures. This ensures we can maintain operations and be ready to reopen as soon as it is safe to do so. For this reason, tuition will still be charged during emergency closure days.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES: ***INJURY, ILLNESS AND EMERGENCIES***

### INJURY

- The staff will treat minor injuries, such as scratches, scrapes, insect bites, etc. We will place an "ouch" report in the child's cubby for such instances. This will inform the parent of the incident that occurred. This will be updated immediately in the parent app so the parent will be informed as soon as the incident occurs.
- If the injury needs medical attention, the director will call the parent of the child. If the parent cannot be reached, the director will call the emergency number on the enrollment form.
- If the injury requires immediate emergency treatment, staff will immediately call for medical assistance and transportation (911). Staff will accompany the child to the hospital and the director will call the parent.

### ILLNESS

If your child becomes ill after arrival, the parents will be notified and are expected to pick up the child as soon as possible. Children are not allowed to be at school with a fever. The child will be removed from the classroom until arrangements are made for pick-up. This is to eliminate the spread of infections.

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LLSC will be following the Missouri Department of Health-Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Guide for Schools to ensure the health of our community. It is LLSC policy that children must stay home if they exhibit the following symptoms or conditions (this list covers the most common illnesses, but is not exclusive):

1. Illness that prevents a child from participating comfortably in preschool activities
2. Illness that results in a greater need for care than our staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
3. Diarrhea, more than three loose stools. (The child can only return 24 hours after a firm stool)
4. Severe coughing (if the child gets red or blue in the face while coughing, or makes a high pitched croupy or whooping sound after coughing)
5. Difficult or rapid breathing
6. Yellowish skin or eyes
7. Unusual spots or rashes
8. Infected skin patch(es) (crusty, yellow, dry or gummy area of skin)
9. Unusually dark or tea colored urine
10. Gray or white stool
11. A fever of 100 by mouth or 99.0 under the arm
12. Headaches or stiff neck
13. Vomiting with or without fever
14. Severe itching of the body or scalp (these could be indicative of lice or scabies)
15. Strep Throat- until 24 hours after start of antibiotic treatment
16. Pertussis (whooping cough) until after five days of appropriate antibiotics

If you are unsure if your child should attend school, please call prior to arrival. We will send children home (or call an emergency contact) if they exhibit any of the above symptoms. Children must remain home for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to school. In the case of a suspected contagious disease or continuing symptoms, a doctor's note is required before your child is permitted to return to school. If your doctor determines that your child has a communicable disease, please inform the center immediately. This will allow us to take the necessary precautions to avoid the spread of the disease.

1. They are free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for a full 24 hours
2. They have been treated with an antibiotic for a full 24 hours
3. They are able to participate comfortably in all usual preschool activities, including outdoor time.

**We hope you understand this is for your child's safety as well as the other children's safety.**



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## MEDICATIONS

If your child needs medication (including over-the-counter drugs), the following procedure must be followed.

1. The parent/guardian must fill out a medication authorization form.
2. All medications must be in a prescription bottle, or in the original container.
3. The parent/guardian must give medication, and medication authorization form to the director.
4. Child's name must be listed on all medications.

## SAFE SLEEP POLICY

The purpose of the Safe Sleep Policy is to maintain a safe sleep environment that reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and sudden unexpected infant deaths (SUIDS) in children less than one year of age. Missouri law (§ 210.223.1, RSMo.) requires all licensed child care facilities that provide care for children less than one year of age to implement and maintain a written safe sleep policy in accordance with the most recent safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Missouri child care licensing rules require licensed child care facilities to provide parent(s) and/or guardians(s) who have infants in, be provided a copy of the facility's safe sleep policy.

Sudden infant death syndrome is the sudden death of an infant less than one year of age that can not be explained after a thorough investigation has been conducted, including a complete autopsy, an examination of the death scene, and a review of the clinical history.

Sudden unexpected infant death is the sudden and unexpected death of an infant less than one year of age in which the manner and cause of death are not immediately obvious prior to investigation. Causes of sudden unexpected infant death include, but are not limited to, metabolic disorders, hypothermia or hyperthermia, neglect or homicide, poisoning, and accidental suffocation.

Child care providers can maintain safer sleep environments for infants that help lower the chances of SIDS. Our goal is to take proactive steps to reduce the risk of SIDS in child care and to work with parents to keep infants safe while they sleep. To do so, this facility will practice the following safe sleep policy:

### SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES

1. Infants, less than one (1) year age, will always be placed on their backs to sleep. When, in the opinion of the infant's licensed health care provider, an infant requires alternative sleep positions or special sleeping arrangements, the provider must have on file at the facility written instructions, signed by the infant's licensed health care provider, detailing the alternative sleep positions or special sleeping arrangements. Caregivers will put the infant to sleep as specified in the written instructions.
2. When infants can easily turn from their stomachs to their backs and from their backs to their stomachs, they shall be initially placed on their backs, but shall be allowed to adopt whatever positions they prefer for sleep. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants

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are placed on their back to sleep, but when infants can easily turn over from their back to their stomach, they may adopt whatever position they prefer for sleep. We will follow this recommendation by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

3. Sleeping infants shall have a supervised nap/sleep period. The caregiver shall be positioned where he or she can hear and see the infant. The caregiver shall physically check on the infant frequently during napping or sleeping and shall remain in close proximity to the infant in order to hear and see them if they have difficulty during napping/sleeping or when they awaken.
4. Equipment such as a sound machine, that may interfere with the caregiver's ability to see or hear a child who may be distressed, is prohibited.
5. Steps will be taken to keep infants from overheating by regulating the room temperature, avoiding excess bedding, and not over-dressing or over-wrapping the infant. Infants should be dressed appropriately for the environment, with no more than one (1) layer more than an adult would wear to be comfortable in that environment. Caregivers will conduct physical checks of the infant to ensure the infant is not overheated or distressed.
6. The lighting in the room must allow the caregiver/teacher to see each infant's face, to view the color of the infant's skin, and to check on the infant's breathing and placement of the pacifier (if used).
7. All caregivers will receive in-person or online training on infant safe sleep based on AAP safe sleep recommendations. This training must be completed within 30 days of employment or volunteering and will be completed every three years.

## SAFE SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

1. Room temperature will be kept at no less than 68°F and no more than 85°F when measured two feet from the floor. Infants are supervised to ensure they are not overheated or chilled.
2. Infants' heads and faces will not be covered during sleep. Infants' cribs will not have blankets or bedding hanging on the sides of the crib. We may use sleep clothing (i.e. sleep sack, sleepers) that is designed to keep an infant warm without the possible hazard of covering the head or face during sleep/nap time.
3. No blankets, loose bedding, comforters, pillows, bumper pads, or any object that can increase the risk of entrapment, suffocation or strangulation will be used in cribs, playpens or other sleeping equipment.
4. Toys and stuffed animals will be removed from the crib when the infant is sleeping. When indicated on the Infant and Toddler Feeding and Care Plan or with written parent consent, pacifiers will be allowed in infants' cribs while they sleep. The pacifier cannot have cords or attaching mechanisms.

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5. Only an individually-assigned safety-approved crib, portable crib, or playpen with a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet will be used for infant napping or sleeping.
6. Only one infant may occupy a crib or playpen at one time.
7. Sitting devices such as car safety seats, strollers, swings, infant carriers, infant slings, and other sitting devices will not be used for sleep/nap time. Infants who fall asleep anywhere other than a crib, portable crib, or playpen must be placed in the crib or playpen for the remainder of their sleep or nap time.
8. No person shall smoke or otherwise use tobacco products in any area of the child care facility during the period of time when children cared for under the license are present.
9. Home monitors or commercial devices marketed to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) shall not be used in place of supervision while children are napping and sleeping.
10. All parents/guardians of infants shall be informed of and given the facility's written Safe Sleep Policy at enrollment.
11. To promote healthy development, infants who are awake will be given supervised "tummy time" for exercise and for play.

## NUTRITION

Please let us know IMMEDIATELY of any food allergies your child may have. We will gladly work with you and your child to accommodate your child's specific needs. Each meal is carefully planned to satisfy all federal and state guidelines as well as planned menus with food kids love. We partner with the USDA to serve the most nutritious meals.

**\*\* We do not allow outside food without a physician's statement explaining why the child is unable to participate in the food program. Please do not send your child with outside food or drinks.**

## TOILET TRAINING

Toilet training is not required for enrollment at LLSC. Independent toilet training is a developmental skill and is encouraged when the child shows readiness signs. The parent/guardian and the child's teacher will work together to assist the child in this process. Teamwork is the key to success. While toilet training, please send three outfits to class with your child. If your child soils three complete outfits, we will put a diaper/pull-up on your child.

## SAFETY ISSUES: WHY WE CHECK IN AND OUT

We ask that parents closely supervise their children in the driveway, lobby and elsewhere in the center when the parent is there. It is recommended that children be offered a hand to hold when departing from the center.

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Children must be clocked in and out each day in the lobby. This is EXTREMELY important since this list is used to check attendance during emergency drills or events.

Children can only be signed out and released to a parent/guardian or those listed as approved pick-ups. This policy is strictly enforced for your child's safety. If an emergency arises and someone not listed needs to pick up your child, you must call and give verbal authorization for pick-up of your child. Please tell them to bring in a photo ID to establish identity.

## CLOCK IN AND OUT PROCEDURES

### CLOCK IN- each day you must:

- Escort your child into the center
- Check-in your child using the kiosk or phone
- Make sure the teacher/director is aware your child has arrived and they will assist your child to his/her classroom

### CLOCK OUT

- Come into the center to pick up your child
- Assist the child in putting on his/her coat/backpack
- Discuss the day's activities with your child's teacher/director
- Sign any necessary paperwork
- Clock out your child using the kiosk or phone

## CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

All center employees are required under state law to report any suspicion of child abuse or child neglect. LLSC staff are trained to recognize signs of abuse and neglect.

## EMERGENCY DRILLS AND EVACUATION

When it comes to emergency drills and evacuations, we are prepared. Regular emergency drills are held at varying times and documented by the director. The state licensing rules and regulations require this. In cases where the center may need to be closed due to an evacuation, we will notify you immediately. Please listen to the local news or radio stations or call and check our answering machine in the case of severe weather closings.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Parents must furnish an extra set of clothes at the center. Clothing items include under and outerwear, except for shoes. This clothing should be replenished immediately should your child use the extra set, or when the seasons change. Please label all personal articles with your child's name. All children's belongings will be sent home on Fridays to be washed and sent back the following week.

Each child will be given a cubby to keep his/her personal belongings, art work, and handouts. Each child's

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cubby will be labeled with their name.

Please do not send any of your child's personal playthings with him/her to the preschool except on designated "Share Days". Please mark your child's items with their name before bringing them in. Make sure to only bring items that loss or breakage would not be disastrous. The preschool is more than happy to look for items, but cannot be held responsible for broken or lost items.

## **DISCHARGE/TERMINATION**

If the parent/guardian finds it necessary to withdraw a child from care, he/she must give a two-week notice prior to withdrawal.

It may be necessary for this facility to stop caring for a child. In rare cases of severe problems, we may be forced to release the child from care without giving a notice. Care may be terminated for the following reasons, but is not limited to these:

- The child is increasingly unhappy and unable to become comfortable with the childcare setting
- The child consistently physically or verbally hurts other children
- The parents/guardians routinely abuses drop-off and pickup times
- Failure to attend for three days without notification
- Child care fees are not paid on time
- The parents/guardians do not work with the childcare provider as a team to provide consistent guidance and discipline
- The childcare provider is unable to meet the needs of the child. This is determined on a case by case basis.

## **GENERAL PARENT INFORMATION**

**LLSC takes videos, photos throughout the year. We may use these items for the newspaper, website, social media, parent boards, etc. If you wish for your child to not be photographed please provide a written request to the director.**

Please check the bulletin board at the front door for special announcements and events that may be of interest to you and your child.

A copy of all of our policies and the licensing rules and regulations are available to you at the LLSC OFFICE for review.

If you have any concerns or questions about the program, feel free to contact your director at any time at 573-218-9428, or email us at [office@tllspectrumcenter.com](mailto:office@tllspectrumcenter.com).

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## RECEIPT AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE PARENT HANDBOOK

I have received and understand LLSC Policies and Procedures outlined in the Parent Handbook.

I understand that if changes need to be made to any of the initial enrollment forms between annual review, it is my responsibility to notify LLSC in writing.

I understand if I have any questions or concerns regarding these policies or any part of the program that I can talk to the director at any time.

***Please sign the following page and return it with your enrollment packet.***

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# LITTLE LEARNERS



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I understand if I have any questions or concerns regarding these policies or any part of the program that I can talk to the director at any time.

***Please sign and return it with your enrollment packet.***

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Signature of Parent

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DATE

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Signature of Director/Administrator

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DATE